

**Washington, D.C.** - The U.S. House of Representatives approved \$10 million in fiscal year 2008 funds for the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission's (IBWC) Rio Grande Flood Control System Rehabilitation project. These funds are included in the U.S. Department of State appropriations bill. Congressman Silvestre Reyes, D-El Paso, had requested that House appropriators include this funding for Rio Grande flood control projects along the Texas-Mexico border.

"IBWC funding languished during the Republican majority, and I am proud to work with my friend and neighbor Rep. Ciro Rodriguez to turn this approach around," said Reyes. "Here in El Paso, we know all too well the importance of flood control funding. Rep. Rodriguez and I have been working with the new Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee chairs David Obey (D-WI) and Nita Lowey (D-NY) for months to ensure that we invest in flood control along our southern border."

"I am proud to work with my friend and neighbor Congressman Reyes to secure \$10 million in funding for the Rio Grande silt removal by the IBWC," said Rodriguez. "El Paso County is under severe threat as a result of last years' flooding, and I am happy to see results from our hard work pay off for our constituents from Canutillo to Tornillo."

The announcement of the \$10 million provision follows Reyes's recent announcement of \$650,000 in fiscal year 2007 funding to remove silt and debris immediately from the 4.5-mile concrete-lined portion of the Rio Grande channel abutting Downtown and South El Paso.

"Since last year's storms demonstrated our vulnerability to flooding, my mission has been to protect El Paso from future floods," said Reyes. "We wanted to make sure we were doing everything possible to keep river water in the channel where it belongs. A levee breach would be catastrophic for our communities and I am pleased that Commissioner Marin believes these resources will mitigate the summer flood threat. The Commissioner and IBWC staff are focused on this, and they are important partners in this effort."

The FY08 appropriation will support needed Rio Grande infrastructure development and maintenance in Texas such as levee maintenance and dredging. The \$10 million triples the Bush Administration's request for the IBWC water quantity account and focuses IBWC's resources where they are needed the most - along the Texas-Mexico border.

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